

# DE News

**March 8, 2002 - Iowa Department of Education - Ted Stilwill, Director**

## **Governor's revised budget supports school funding**

Education remains a top state priority in Governor Vilsack's revised Fiscal 03 budget recommendations released yesterday. The revisions are in response to anticipated revenue shortfalls expected for the next fiscal year.

Just as he did in his initial Fiscal 03 recommendation in January, the Governor's new budget protects services for families, children and seniors, as well as public safety. Virtually all segments of education will maintain their funding levels from this year, while most state agencies will experience some level of reduction in addition to cuts already implemented. Highlights include:

- \$60.2 million for K-12 education and AEAs, which essentially is the \$59 million original recommendation plus about \$1 million expected to expand English as a Second Language (ESL) funding.
- Maintenance of categorical funds, including \$40 million for the new teacher quality initiatives, \$30 million for class size reduction programs, \$10 million for technology, and maintenance funding for Phase III/Ed Excellence.
- Funding for community colleges at the original Fiscal 03 recommended level, which is about a \$4 million increase over the current year.

Please remember that we now must wait for legislative reaction and response, which we can expect sometime next week. Actual budget bills probably will not be debated for another two to three weeks, so we still are very much in limbo when it comes to appropriations for next year, including allowable growth rates.

Because of the remaining uncertainty, it's important to continue your discussions about how to respond to further budget cuts should allowable growth be set below 1%. Although we have no assertion that will happen, it will be very helpful for you to be as prepared as possible to respond and have the support of your staff and community.

## **Legislative highlights**

The community college licensure bill is now in the Senate. The bill is a compromise between community college administration and the ISEA. The bill sets minimum standards for full-time faculty in exchange for elimination of licensure.

There is a charter school bill that would secure federal funding for charter schools in Iowa that are chartered by a school district. The proposal is substantially better than legislation discussed in 2000 and 2001. Provisions include:

- 10 pilot charter school buildings chartered by the local school board;
- The State Board would approve the charters (4-year term);
- No charter school districts;
- Charter buildings would operate as public schools for all practical purposes;
- The district would be the fiscal agent for the charter building but the building would have flexibility in how funding is spent;
- HF 2272 requirements would apply to the charter building;
- The State Board and the local board could revoke the charter;
- This legislation would sunset in eight years.

**Please note: Clarification for use of mentoring funds**

1. The \$500 is paid to mentors; beginning teachers do not receive dollars for participating in the Mentoring & Induction program.
2. Money paid to mentors is considered salary; therefore state and fed taxes, IPERS and FICA are deducted from the pay.

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***Iowa Department of Education Mission:***

***"Helping communities meet the learning needs of all of their children and adults"***

*DE News* provides timely information about legislative and policy issues, grants and funding, trends in education, and other items of immediate interest to Iowa educators and policymakers. Contact Kathi Slaughter.



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